

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Original) A protective film (12) of plastic, characterized in that it is produced in single-ply, unbacked form from a hot-melt adhesive (14, 14').
2. (Original) The protective film (12) of claim 1, characterized in that it is self-adhesive and in particular transparent.
3. (Currently Amended) The protective film (12) of claim 1 ~~or 2~~, characterized in that the hot-melt adhesive (14, 14') is a thermoplastic hot-melt adhesive based on a substance from the following group of substances: thermoplastic polyurethanes, thermoplastic polyamides, thermoplastic copolyamides, thermoplastic polyesters, thermoplastic copolyesters, thermoplastic polyolefins, especially atactic poly- α -olefins, polypropylene or polyethylene, thermoplastic ethylene/vinyl acetate copolymers or a combination thereof.
4. (Currently Amended) The protective film (12) of claim 1 ~~or 2~~, characterized in that the hot-melt adhesive (14, 14') is a reactive hot-melt adhesive, based in particular on reactive PUR or reactive polyolefin or a combination.
5. (Currently Amended) The protective film (12) of ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, characterized in that photoprotection and/or oxidation inhibitors are included.

6. (Currently Amended) The protective film (12) of ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1, characterized in that it has a thickness in the range from 50 micrometers to 500 micrometers, in particular 200 micrometers to 300 micrometers.

7. (Original) A method of applying a protective film, characterized in that a hot-melt adhesive (14, 14') is heated in a primary melting region (18) to application temperature, in that it subsequently flows off out of the primary melting region (18), the flow-off and application temperature being regulated such that a film (12) of desired width is formed, and in that a product to be protected with the film (12) is moved transversely to the film (12) in such a way that the film (12) covers the product in desired fashion.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, characterized in that the film width (Z') on emergence from the primary melting region (18) is set so as to correspond approximately to the width (B) of the product to be protected with the film, plus twice the height (H) of the product.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7 ~~or 8~~, characterized in that the hot-melt adhesive (14, 14') is heated to an application temperature situated in the range from 80° and 250°C, in particular between 130°C and 210°C, preferably between 160°C and 200°C, the hot-melt adhesive (14, 14') being melted preferably in a preliminary melting region (26) before being heated in the primary melting region (18) to the application temperature.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~any one of claims 7 to 9~~ claim 7, characterized in that the protective film (12) is used as a self-adhesive protective film (12) and for this purpose the temperature of the product to which the self-adhesive protective film (12) is

intended to adhere and the application temperature of the hot-melt adhesive (14, 14') are harmonized with one another such that the protective film (12) enters into sufficient wetting with the surface of the product, the temperature difference between the product and the application temperature being preferably at least 50°C.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~any one of claims 7 to 10~~ claim 7, characterized in that the surface temperature of the product to be protected is not more than 80°C and not less than 0°C, in particular between 20°C and 40°C.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~any one of claims 7 to 11~~ claim 7, characterized in that the protective film (12) flows off onto a repellently coated supporting element (50), which is moved transversely to the film (12) in a first direction (52), so that a sheet of film is deposited on the supporting element (50), in that the product to be protected with the protective film (12) is placed on the sheet of film deposited on the supporting element (50) and the supporting element (50) is then moved in an opposite second direction (54) transversely to the film (12), so that the product is enwrapped the protective film (12).

13. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~any one of claims 7 to 12~~ claim 7, characterized in that the protective film (12) is separated off to desired length.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~any one of claims 7 to 13~~ claim 7, characterized in that the product covered with the protective film (12) is treated with hot air so that the film (12) shrink-fits to the outer contours of the product.

15. (Original) A device (16, 16') for applying a protective film (12) of hot-melt adhesive (14, 14'), having a primary melting region (18), in which the hot-melt adhesive (14, 14') is heated to its application temperature, and having an application unit (20) via which the liquefied hot-melt adhesive (14) flows off in such a way that it forms a coherent film (12) of predetermined width and predetermined thickness.

16. (Original) The device (16, 16') of claim 15, characterized in that the application unit (20) is in the form of a slot die (34) whose slot depth (T) and slot width (Z) are preferably adjustable, and in particular are adjustable in such a way that the width (Z') of the resulting film (12) corresponds approximately to the width (B) of a product to be protected with the film (12), plus twice the height (H) of the product.

17. (Currently Amended) The device (16, 16') of claim 15 ~~or 16~~, characterized in that it has a preliminary melting region (26) which is upstream of the primary melting region (18) and in which the hot-melt adhesive (14, 14') is melted.

18. (Currently Amended) The device (16, 16') of ~~any one of claims 15 to 17~~ claim 15, characterized in that a supporting element (50) is provided for accommodating a product to be protected with the protective film (12), the supporting element (50) being preferably coated in such a way that the protective film (12) does not stick to it.

19. (Currently Amended) The use of the protective film (12) of ~~any one of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1 for packaging commodity products and consumer products for their storage and transport.

20. (Currently Amended) The use of the protective film (12) of ~~any one of claims 1 to 6~~
claim 1 for protecting the exterior surfaces of automobiles and/or automobile parts and
particularly of painted surfaces of these kinds.

21. (Currently Amended) The use of the protective film (12) of ~~any one of claims 1 to 6~~
claim 1 as a substrate for printing inks, particularly for imprints with information content or
advertising content.